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The Story of Godfrey Nims

OF

OLD DEERFIELD.

"The Story of Godfrey Nims,"

as read to

The Nims Family Association,

at

Deerfield, Massachusetts,

on

August 13, 1914,

by

Francis Nims Thompson.

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GODFREY NIMS.

Often has Old Deerfield been the shrine toward which a band of pilgrims has been drawn by some common interest; but never before has the family of Godfrey Nims gathered in this way on his home lot to honor his memory.

Children of his children, we have come home to tread the soil upon which fell the sweat, tears and blood of our fathers and mothers in those early days of labor, suffering and savage murder. Periods of calm there were too, when the spinning wheels hummed in the primitive homes of this little village and the scythes swung and swished in the golden fields out yonder, and the settlers forgot for a time that the dark bordering forests hid wild beasts formed as men but fierce as fiends.

Here, Godfrey Nims builded—and, after fire devoured it, builded anew—his home, as pioneers have built and will build while there shall remain a frontier; and he and those about his hearth loved it as we love that for which we have planned and worked. As our minds revive the personality of our common ancestor, that common blood which inseparably links us should thrill in our veins. This Nims lot was, not so long ago, the stage upon which was enacted one of those pioneer tragedies too blood-curdling and awful to adequately picture in words:—the naked Indians—painted demons—slaughtering children by the lurid light of a flaring home, amid the din of savage yells and the shrieks of terrified women and of children butchered or burned.

"Not so long ago"—for I remember my grandfather Nims, big in both brawn and brain, and all heart; his grandfather was the Greenfield settler, and his grandfather was the head of that suffering household. So recently did the Great Spirit release the first waves of civilization to break on the eastern shore of this broad land, and so recently did his red children, wild denizens of the wilderness, seek to turn that irresistible flood back from the land their fathers had possessed for uncounted generations.

Long enough ago, however, were these events, to be veiled in that mist of time which, half concealing, half revealing, lures curiosity and charms imagination. The Honorable George Sheldon, in our well-thumbed bible of local history, says:—"A family tradition places Godfrey Nims here, as third settler before 1671." "Real estate here was sold to such men only as were approved by Dedham." He "bought home lot No. 35, in 1674, but I do not find him living here until the Permanent Settlement." In "True Stories of New England Captives" Miss C. Aliee Baker says:—"The third settler, Godfrey Nims, came from Northampton to Deerfield in 1670, living there 'in a sort of house where he had dug a hole or cellar in the side hill,' south of Colonel Wilson's. At the allotment of the homesteads in 1671, he built a house, on what lot is not known." Mr. Sheldon says that in 1704 Thankful Nims and her husband were living on this Wilson lot "in a sort of side-hill cave, which was so covered with snow as to escape the observation of the enemy" and that the Nims houses burned in 1694 and 1704 each stood "on the site of the present Nims house."

Of the time earlier than these dates we find another tradition, pointing back to France, and a colonial public record not inconsistent with the tradition: David Nims, junior, told his grandson, the late Brigham Nims of Roxbury, that he had been told by David, senior, a grandson of Godfrey, that Godfrey Nims was a Huguenot, came to America as a mere lad and at first spelled his name Godefroi de Nismes, but changed the spelling to suit the colonial way of pronouncing it. Deacon Zadock Nims of Sullivan received and transmitted a similar tradition as to the spelling.

A few miles north of the Mediterranean and west of the Rhone lies the ancient city of Nimes, or Nismes. Now a place of seventy or eighty thousand people, and the capital of the department of Gard, it was the Roman Nemasus. Conquered by the Romans 121 years before Christ, it became one of the chief provincial cities; was plundered by the Vandals in 407, suffered from the West Goths and Saracens, and was in 1258 united to France. Nimes suffered in the Huguenot wars, and was in 1815 the scene of reactionary atrocities against the Protestants. The city still retains the coat of arms used when it was a Roman province: This represents a palm tree, to which a crocodile is chained, and bears the ab-

breviation Col. Nem. for its old name Colonia Nemasus. Here are notable Roman antiquities, including an amphitheatre which, although one of the oldest buildings in the world, is still used in the good old barbaric way. Here, in 1787, was born Guizot, the distinguished French historian and statesman; and here in Nimes, if we may credit tradition, was born, sometime about 1650, Godfrey, whom the English in New England called Nims.

What of the public record? Well, the records tells very solemnly, but graphically, of a boy, much out of humor with life in an English colony, conspiring with two other young scamps to run away to the French; and, when all the good folk had gone to meeting, 'ransacking about the house' to find the wherewithal to furnish the expedition. An Indian in it, too! Can you beat that? Boy all over; and French boy at that. If he wasn't Godefroi de Nismes, where did he come from and where were all the other Nimses?

So much for speculation and for sympathy with the boy: Now here are the very cold facts, and no sympathy at all:— (The first book of Hampshire probate records, at pages 88 and 91.)

"Att the County Courte holden Att Springfield Sept: 24: 1667: For holding this Courte there were Present Capt John Pynchon One of ye Honnoble Assists of this Collony: Also Mr. Henry Clarke Leiut Willm Clarke Leiut Sam'll Smith And Eli Holyoke Recorder Associates and ye Jury were" etc. etc. * * * * * * * * * * *

"James Bennet, Godfrey Nims & Benoni Stebbins, young lads of Northampton being by Northampton Comissionrs bound ouer to this Corte to answer for diverse crimes & misdemeanrs comitted by them, were brought to this Corte by ye Constable of yt Towne weh 3 lads are accused by Robert Bartlett for that they gott into his house two Sabbath dayes when all the family were at the Publike Meeting: On ye first of weh tymes, they vizt. Nims & Stebbins did ransack about the house & tooke away out of diverse places of the house vist. 24 shillings in silver & 7s in Wampum wth the intention to run away to the ffrench: Al which is by them confessed, weh wickednesse of theires hath also been accompanyd with frequent lying to excuse & justify themselves, especially on Nims his pt, who it

seemes hath been a ringleader in their vilainys: ffor all weh their crimes and misdemeanors this Corte doth Judge yt the said 3 lads shalbe well whipt on their naked bodys vizt. Nims & Bennet wth 15 lashes apeece & Benoni Stebbins with 11 lashes. And the said Nims & Stebbins are to pay Robert Bartlett the summe of 4l being accounted treble according to law, for what goods he hath lost by their meanes. Also those psons that reed any money of any of the said lads, are to restore it to the s'd Robert Bartlett. But there being made to the Corte an earnest petition & request by Ralfe Hutchinson father-in-law to ye said James Bennet & diverse other considerable psons yt the said Bennets corporall punishment might be released by reason of his mothers weakness, who it is feared may suffer much inconveniency thereby, that punishment was remitted upon his father-in-law his engaging to this Corte to pay ffive pounds to ye County as a fyne for the said Bennets offence, weh 5l is to be paid to ye County Treasurer for ye use of ye County. Also John Stebbins, Junior being much suspected to have some hand in their plotting to run away. This Corte doth ordr ye Comissionrs of Northampton to call him before ym & to examine him about that or any other thing whereon he is suspected to be guilty wth ye said lads, & so act therein according to their discretion, attending law. Also they are to call the Indian called Quequelatt who had a hand in their plott & to deale with him according as they fynd."

Before the year was over the Indian "Quequelett was 'whipt 20 lashes' for helping Godfrey Nims and Benoni Stebbins 'about running away to Canada.'" At a court held the following March John Stebbins, junior, a brother of Benoni, acknowleged that he had been privy to the plot of Bennett and Stebbins to run away, and the court, because he had concealed his knowledge of it, sentenced him to be "whipt on the naked body with ten stripes or else to pay 40s to the County Treasurer." His father paid the fine.

On page 143 of the same book of records it appears that:— "At the County Cote holden at Northampton March 25th 167 2-3 * * * Godfrey Nims * * * James Bennett Zebediah Williams * * * Benoni Stebbins * * * all of Northampton took the Oath of Fidelity to this Governmt."

There were other names, which I have not copied, but these were the three bad boys, now loyal men, with presumably the same Zebediah Williams who "sold out his land in Northampton, in 1674. He was here in 1675, and was one of the teamsters killed with Lothrop. His widow, Mary, daughter of Wm. Miller, married Godfrey Nims" November 26th, 1677. In 1692 the Court ordered Patience Miller, as the grandmother of Zebediah, junior, "to take him and educate him, or get him out for education"; but his stepfather, Godfrey Nims, objected, and the case was postponed. This Zebediah Williams was captured with John Nims and died in Canada. His widow married again, as had his mother. His grandmother had married three times. Deerfield in Indian times was no place for single blessedness.

In 1674 Godfrey Nims bought from William Smead, whose daughter he married in 1692, the north part of lot No. 25; and in 1701 he sold it to his brother-in-law Ebenezer Smead.

May 19th, 1676, Nims, Bennet and Stebbins proved that their "Oath of Fidelity," taken three years earlier, was no idle formality; serving, as they did, under Capt. William Turner of Boston in the Falls Fight against the Pocumtuck Indians. Spurred by the enemy's bold harassment, about 140 whites marched in dead of night through the primeval wilderness against unknown numbers of a savage tribe. Surprising them at the salmon fishing falls near the mouth of Fall river, some 400 Indians were slain; but the white men lost Capt. Turner, James Bennett and forty others. A grave discovered during my boyhood days, in the gravel bank on the farm of my grandfather Nims, is thought by Mr. Sheldon to have been that of Capt. Turner, who was shot on the retreat as he rode up the west bank of Green river.

January 6th, 1685, "Godfrey Nims, for five acres want, had fourteen acres 'at the south end of the commonly called Martins Meadow: that to be his south line: to run in length from the Grate river to the Grate hill & so take his breadth northerly.' "

February 5th, 1687, a committee was chosen to measure the common fence and lay out to each proprietor his proportion on a basis of eleven feet to an acre, and Godfrey Nims was assigned 27 rods and 11 feet to maintain.

The first meeting of the inhabitants of Deerfield which was recorded as a "town" meeting "appears to have been held December 16th, 1686." Here the names of William Smead and Benoni Stebbins again appear, now as two of the six selectmen, and among other transactions of this meeting was the laying out of wood lots. "A list of the wood lots as they were Drawn April 20 1688" shows that "Godfrey Nims" drew No. 38 and held 14 cow commons, and that each of his two lots at Long Hill was 21 rods wide. In "A List of Wood Lots on the Mountain, the first Lot beginning at Deerfield River Laying along by the River side:—" Lot No. 1 fell to "Gorfre Nims"; who, with his 14 cow commons, was entitled to a lot 28 rods wide.

"May 30th, 1689. Att a legal Town meeting in Deerfield Godfre Nims was chosen constable for the year ensuing until anothr be chosen & sworn." A month earlier Governor Andros had been deposed by a revolution of the people, and our friend Stebbins was one of the selectmen who had sent a representative to confer with the "Counsell of Safety".

December 14th, 1691, Nims was chosen one of the five selectmen. This was at a critical time, as the previous month "about one hundred and fifty Indians came here from the Hudson, complicating affairs, and increasing the alarm."

Our ancestor was the owner of house lots 27 & 28. The numbering of lots began at the north end of the street on the west side, and ended at the north end on the east side, and the lots were drawn May 14th, 1671. The history of this tract and of the buildings on it is worthy a separate paper, and it is sufficient to say here that he purchased lot No. 27 in 1692, it being conveyed by the administrator of the estate of Benjamin Barrett to Godfrey Nims, cordwainer. The house burned January 4th, 1694; and November 21st of that year he bought lot No. 28 from Benjamin Hastings, a carpenter. The Nims house stood within the stockade and burned February 29th, 1704, and the present house is more than two centuries old.

A manuscript, (probably an official report), found among the papers of Fritz John Winthrop, governor of Connecticut 1698—1707, and giving "an account of ye destruction at Derefd", bears a long list of losses, headed by "The Rev'nd Mr. John Williams" and "Godfrey Nims"; by which it appears that theirs were among the most valuable houses burned, and that each lost house and barn and all in them. The white church, town office, town hall and school building and the old academy building, now Memorial Hall, all stand on the Nims tract.

January 4th, 1694, when the Nims house burned, the stepson Jeremiah Hull perished. The jury of inquest reported:— "The said Jeremiah Hull, being put to bed in a chamber with another child, after some time, Henry, said Godfrey Nims's son, a boy of about 10 years of age, went into the chamber with a light & by accident fired some flax or tow, which fired the house. Sd Henry brought down one child, & going up again to fetch sd Jeremiah, the chamber was all aflame & before other help came, sd Jeremiah was past recovery." Poor little Jeremiah was but four years old, and his sister Elizabeth Hull was five. Did our little ancestress so narrowly escape death? Or was the "one child", whom Henry brought down, Thomas Nims—just then the baby of this growing family?

This year, 1694, Godfrey Nims bought a part of house lot No. 1 (at the north end of the street, west side,) from John Weller, junior. In 1719 Godfrey's son John owned real estate there, and in 1774 Abner Nims sold it for ninety pounds.

August 21st, 1695, our ancestor and four other men "coming out in ye Morning on Horses goeing to mil & wth Baggs under ym, Had 7 or 8 guns discharged upon ym, unexpectedly, & seeing noebody till ye guns were shot of, wherein eminent gracious providence appeared that no more mischiefe was done to ors. For except Joseph Barnard, who was shot downe off his horse and sorely wounded, not one more hurt, wheras ours were surprised & ye Indians had time." So John Pynehon wrote to Gov. Wm. Stoughton; and Stephen Williams adds to the "Redeemed Captive" a statement that "then N(ims) took him up & his horse was shot down and then he was mounted behind M(attoon) and came of home." Barnard,

who was the town clerk of Deerfield, died September sixth, and Mr. Sheldon says that his gravestone bears the earliest date in the old graveyard.

That year the meeting house, thirty feet square, was building; and "Att a legal Town Meeting in Deerfd Novemb: 22 1695 Godfrey Nims was chosen Collector to collect and gather two rates yt is to say a Town rate and a Meeting House Rate both Made in ye year 1694 which Rates he is to deliver being gathered to the Selectmen." He was one of the selectmen in 1695 and 1696.

March 3rd, 1701, Godfrey Nims, Sergt. Allyn and Corp. Wells were chosen to lay a road to the land on the west side of the river.. Their report was made June 14th, and they also reported a "hie way to ye Green River lands", which highway led through the present Main street of Greenfield, and then northerly through Greenfield Meadows, where now live Nims decendants of the fifth generation.

In 1702 Nims and Stebbins were again associated—this time on the school committee; the town having in 1698 adopted a liberal policy of education, and voted that "a school be continued in ye Town: That all heads of families yt have Children whether male or female between ye ages of six and ten years, shal pay by the poll to sd school whether yd send such children to School or not".

Godfrey Nims had six children by his first wife, Mary Miller, who was the widow of Zebediah Williams and had a son and daughter by her first husband; and the second wife, Mehitable Smead, also a widow, had a son and daughter by her first husband Jeremiah Hull and five children by Mr. Nims.

Of course the Williams boy and girl were thus half- brother and -sister to the Miller-Nims children, and step-brother and -sister to the Smead-Nims children; but not related to the Hull boy and girl, who were, however, half-brother and -sister to the Smead-Nims children, and step-brother and -sister to the Miller-Nims children.

Among them, the four sets of children had but five parents, of whom four were ancesters of the Greenfield branch of the family, as John Nims (the son of Godfrey by his first wife) married Elizabeth Hull (the daughter of Godfrey's second wife by her first husband), and their son Thomas went to Greenfield, married Esther Martindale, and assisted in populating the new town.

Godfrey Nims' first wife, Mary, the Widow Williams, had two children; Mary Williams, born December 24th, 1673, whose fate I do not know; and Zebediah Williams, junior, born in 1675, who was captured with his half-brother John Nims in 1703, and died in Canada in 1706, leaving a widow and two children.

Godfrey's first child, Rebecca, was born and died in August 1678. John and another Rebecca were born August 14, 1679: John was captured October 8, 1703, and escaped May 14, 1705; married Elizabeth Hull, as stated above; Rebecca married Philip Mattoon January 15, 1702, and was slain with their only child in the massacre of 1704. Henry, born April 20, 1682, was also slain in 1704. Thankful, born August 29, 1684, married Benjamin Munn and they were unharmed at the time of the massacre.

Ebenezer was born March 14, 1687, captured in 1704, redeemed in 1714.

Their mother died April 27, 1688; and, June 27, 1692, their father married the Widow Mehitable Hull, whose daughter Elizabeth Hull (born December 23, 1688,) was also captured in 1704, and after her redemption married John Nims; Mrs. Hull's son Jeremiah (born January 15, 1690,) was the child burned in the Nims house in 1694. Thomas Nims was born November 8, 1693, and died September 10, 1697. Mehitable, born May 16, 1696, and the twins Mary and Merey, born February 28, 1699, were all burned in the later house February 29, 1704. The youngest child, Abigail, born May 27, 1700, was captured in 1704 and carried to Canada, "whence she came not back." Mrs. Nims, also taken captive, was slain on the trail; probably Saturday, March 4, 1704.

When the flame-lit night of February 29th, 1704, gave place to the cold dawn of March first; and Godfrey Nims, standing here, looked upon what had been his own hard-won home and was then the smoking funeral pyre of his three little daughters, there was left to comfort him but one member of his family.

His eldest son and his step-son captured the fall before; His son Henry, aged 22, slain; His eldest daughter and her baby boy slain; His wife, his boy Ebenezer, his baby Abigail, Elizabeth Hull his step-daughter, and Mattoon his son-in-law,—all led away into the night by bloody and brutal savages:

One alone was there:—Thankful, his daughter, whose snow-covered home had concealed its inmates.

Mrs. Nims and Philip Mattoon were slain on the march. Her mother (Elizabeth Smead) and her brother's wife and two children were killed. Deerfield suffered that night. It is written:—

"48 dead, 111 captives in Canada; only 25 men, as many women and 75 children, 43 of whom were under ten years of age, were left."

The next year John escaped from the enemy and made his long way back to Deerfield; but his father, Godfrey Nims, had escaped the bonds of mortality, and his body had been borne down the Albany road and laid in the old burying ground near the ford of the river, where rest those who hewed their own way into the wilderness and blazed a trail for civilization.

Zebediah Williams remained a captive in Canada and soon died. Ebenezer and Elizabeth Hull were redeemed, but Abigail grew up among the French and Indians, and refused to return to New England and protestantism. The fascinating story of her life is beautifully told, under the title "The Two Captives", by Miss Baker, whose genius for accurate research was supplemented by the power to read between the lines and to express her discoveries and her opinions in most charming English.

In the old Hampshire probate records, book 3, page 127, is this entry:—"Power of Administration on the Estate of Godfrey Nims late of Deerfield Deceasd was Granted on the 10th day of April Annoque Domini: 1705 to Benjamin Mun of sd Deerfield—He Having Given Bond for the faithful Discharge of his Trust" and on the next page follows:—

"An Inventory of Godfrey Nims Estate Taken March ye 12th: 1705.

	L		
One Muskett		12	
One pr of pistolls	1	4	
One Simmeter		10	
Powder And Lead		3	
One Coat and 2 Wast Coats	1	10	
One pr Leather Britches		12	
2 pr Stockins		5	
A pr of Shooes		3	6
One pr of Boots		17	
2 Pewter Platters		7	
One Pot and Pot hooks		10	
Sixteen yds and a Halfe of New Cloath at 2|8d p pr yd	2	4	
One Brass Kittle		6	6
One Iron Kittle		10	
One pr of And Irons	1	6	
One Trammel		3	6
One Saddle and Bridle	1	12	
2 Neckloaths		4	4
One Coverlid		13	
One pr of Sheets		8	4
One Hatt		4	
One Barrel of Pork	2	10	
13 Bushels of Wheat		1	19
To 2 Howes	L	5	
Meal		1	4
One Piece of a timber Chain		6	8
One Horse		5	
2 oxen		6	
one Cow		2	
one Calfe		14	
One Cow	2	10	
One Cow	2	6	
One Cow	2	5	
One Heifer	1	9	
One Heifer	1	1	
One Mare Colt		15	
One Cart and Wheels	1	12	
One Plow and Irons		16	
One Plow Clevy & Pins		2	
One Chain		5	
One Harrow		8	

By old Irons Burnt In the House which were brought to Northampton and were Prised by Medad Pumry & John A Ward the whole they Prised at five Pounds

April 10th 1705 5

To one Homelot Containing Six Acres
To one Homelot Containing Two Acres
To one Lot In Great Meadow Containing Eight Acres
To one Lot in Great Meadow Containing Seaven Acres.
To one Lot In the Plain Containing Seven Acres & Halfe
To Two Lotts In old fort containing Six acres
To one Lot In Second Division Containing Twelve Acres
To one Lot In Second Division Containing Four Acres
To Thirty Acres of Wood Land at the Great River
The aforesd Inventory being Taken In Deerfield by us Eleazr Hawks, Edward Allin, Ebenezer Smead

Hampshr Ss, April 10th. 1705 Benjamin Mun Adm. on the Estate of Godfrey Nims Deceased made oath Before Saml Partridge Esqr. Judge of Probate of Wills &c for sd County that the aforegoing Inventory was a true one of the Estate of sd Deceased So farr as he knows and if more Appear He will Readily make Discovery thereof from time to time

Test John Pynchon Regr."

Following the record of the administrator's account on page 198, is the following entry, in which appears what must have been one of the first attempts by a Massachusetts probate court to appoint a receiver of the property of an absentee:—

"Springfield Januy 11th 170 8-9 As To a Settlement of the Estate of Godfrey Nims of Deerfield Deceasd. I order that the Administrar Have the Dispose of Moveables to Pay the Debts and as to the land I settle as follows (viz) To John Nims Eldest Son to the Deceased 27 lb. Being a debt due to sd John Nims In Right of his wife Elizabeth Hull out of land of sd Deceased Also a Double Portion of the Remainder of sd Land to sd John Nims, and to Ebenezr Nims, And to Benjamin Mun in Right of his wife Thankful Nims, and Abigail Nims Equal shares of sd land to be set out to them Equally both as to Quantity and Quality according to the The above sd Division by Capt. Jonathan Wells Edward Allin Eliezr Hawkes Thomas French Ebenezer Smead or any Three of them to be sworn Before the Judge of Probates, Ebenezr Nims and Abigail Nims share to be under the Improvemt of John Nims and Benjamin Mun Till they Return from Captivity or be otherwise Disposed according to Law. Sd John Nims and Benjamin Mun to be accountable for the Rents of sd lands to sd Ebenezr Nims and Abigail Nims, And in Case the Moveables will not Amount to Pay the Debts Then Each Legatee to Refund there Ratable Part to sd Administrator, And in Case the Moveables Amount to more Then The Debts Then to be Divided in proportion as abovesd. And in Case John Nims the eldest son see Cause to Purchase the Land of the other Three Children he is allowed five yeares time to do it in Paying the Just value of the same According to a Just Apprizemt to be made at the five yeares End by three Indifferent men upon oath as the sd Children shall agree or as the Judge of Probate Shall Appoint

Saml Partridge"

From these four of Godfrey's children are those today of the Nims name or blood descended: John; Thankful; Ebenezer; Abigail.

JOHN NIMS.

October 8th, 1703, according to the written account by the Reverend Stephen Williams, "Zebediah Williams & John Nims went into ye meadow in ye evening to look after creatures, & wer ambushed by indians in ye ditch beyond Frary's bridge, who fird at ym, but missd ym, and took W. quick, and N ran to ye pond, & then returnd to ym (fearing to be shot,) ye Indians wound cattle and went off. Ye men were carried to Canada, where W. dyd, & N ran away in ye year 1705, wth Joseph petty, Thos Baker and Martin Kellogue. My father escaped narrowly ye nt before at Broughtons hill." By reason of this event John was not at Deerfield in 1704 when so many of the family were slain.

October 22nd, 1703, Reverend Solomon Stoddard, writing from Northampton to Governor Dudley, adds this postscript concerning Godfrey Nims:—

"Since I wrote: the father of the two Captives belonging to Deerfield, has importunately desired me to write to yr Ex'cy that you wd endeavor the Redemption of his children—I request that if you have any opportunity, you would not be backward to such a work of mercy."

Mr. Sheldon says:—"There is a tradition in the Nims family, that when DeRouville's expedition was being planned, some of the leaders made John Nims the offer to save harmless all of his friends, if he would act as their guide. The proposition was joyfully accepted by Nims, with the expectation of being able to escape and give seasonable warning. But when the matter came to the ears of the Governor, he forthwith put a stop to the project, as a dangerous experiment. Soon after John Sheldon left Canada for home in 1705, four young men, disappointed at not being allowed to return with him, made their escape and reached home about June 8th.

* * * They had no arms, but probably a small stock of provisions, and reached our frontier more dead than alive from hunger and fatigue.'' Joseph Petty's own account of this escape, addressed to Rev. Mr. Williams and preserved in Memorial Hall, details the incidents and sufferings of their journey from Montreal to our frontier in May and June, 1705.

John Nims was married in 1707 by Rev. John Williams to Elizabeth Hull, and they lived on the old homestead. Miss Baker says:—''In the summer of 1712, the Canadian governor proposed that the English captives in Canada should be 'brought into or near Deerfield, and that the French prisoners should be sent home from thence.' Gov. Dudley ordered Col. Partridge to collect the French captives here. When it was known in Deerfield that an escort was to be sent with them, there was no lack of volunteers. 'We pitcht upon Lt. Williams' says Partridge, 'with the consent of his father, who hath the Frentch tongue, Jonath Wells, Jno Nims, an absolute pilot, Eliezer Warner * * * and Thos. Frentch, who also hath the Frentch tongue, but think of the former (Nims) most apt for the design.' The party under command of Lieut. Samuel Williams, a youth of twenty-three, started on the 10th of July, returning in September with nine English captives. Godfrey Nims had died some years before. Ebenezer was still in captivity, and John Nims evidently went as the head of the family, hoping to effect the release of his brother and sister. I judge that in urging Abigail's return, John made the most of the provision for her in his father's will, as the story goes in Canada that the relatives of the young Elizabeth, who were Protestants, and were amply provided with this world's goods, knowing that she had been carried to the Sault au Recollect, went there and offered a considerable sum for her ransom, and the savages would willingly have given her up if she herself had shown any desire to go with her relatives. To her brother's entreaties that she would return with him, she replied that she would rather be a poor captive among Catholics than to become the rich heiress of a Protestant family, and John came back without his sister and brother.''

John Nims, and his wife Elizabeth, were blessed with a dozen children and more than five dozen grandchildren. She died September 21st, 1754, aged 66 years; and he died December 29th, 1762, aged 83; and their son John died October 6th, 1769, aged 54; as we may read on the mossy stones down in the old graveyard.

Of their other sons, Thomas settled in Greenfield, as before mentioned; Jeremiah lived in his father's house and was followed by his son Seth, deacon and revolutionary soldier, who kept the post office here from 1820 to 1831 in the old house, and was in turn followed by his son Edwin, town clerk from 1832 to 1834 and the father of Mrs. Eunice Kimberly Nims Brown, who sold the place in 1894 (after it had been in the family for more than two centuries) to Mrs. Silvanus Miller, whose daughters are now its hospitable owners. Mrs. Brown's maternal grandparents were also descended respectively from John Nims, junior, and the fourth brother, Daniel, who removed to Shelburne.

Godfrey—John—John—Reuben—Joel—Dirixa—Eunice K.
Godfrey—John—Jeremiah—Seth—Edwin—Eunice K.
Godfrey—John—Daniel—Asa—Betsey—Dirixa—Eunice K.

THANKFUL NIMS MUNN.

Thankful Nims, at the age of nineteen, married Benjamin Munn, aged twenty; and bore him eleven children, most of whom were given the names of Godfrey's children. As has been stated, the young couple's humble and snow-covered home preserved them from death or capture in 1704, when all at the Nims home, except her father, were taken. Abigail, named for her captive aunt, married Joseph Richardson of Keene; and three younger daughters married Northampton, Springfield and Medway men.

EBENEZER NIMS.

Ebenezer Nims, captured in 1704, was then seventeen years old and made the march to Canada, was adopted by a squaw and lived at Lorette. Of his romantic marriage to Sarah Hoyt (born May 6th, 1686, to David & Sarah Wilson Hoyt) Mr. Sheldon says:—

"The priests urged her to marry. They pertinaciously insisted upon it as a duty, and had a French officer selected as her mate, thus assuring themselves of a permanent resident, and popish convert. Professing to be convinced of her duty in the matter, Sarah declared one day in public that she would be married, if any of her fellow-captives would have her. Ebenezer Nims, a life-long companion, at once stepped forward and claimed her for his bride. The twain were made one upon the spot. The wily priests had met their match, for it is easy to believe that this was a prearranged issue on the part of the lovers."

They and their first son, Ebenezer, came home with Stoddard and Williams in 1714; and it is said that so much attached to them were the Indians of Lorette that they came to Quebec in a body to rescue this family, having heard it had been by force taken on board the ship. Ebenezer, junior, is supposed to have removed to Keene about 1739. There were four other sons, of whom David removed to Keene about 1740, and Moses removed to Connecticut after the Revolution. Elisha was killed by Indians at Fort Massachusetts in 1746, and Amasa removed to Greenfield.

It was among the thirty-six or more grand-children of Godfrey that the dispersement of the Nims name began, as his sons had remained in Deerfield. The census records of the United States show that in 1790 there were nineteen families named Nims:—15 in Massachusetts, and 4 in New Hampshire,—and 126 persons in these 19 families. In N. H. Alpheus' family, 3 males and 3 females, and David's, 6 males and 4 females, all of Keene; and in Sullivan were Eliakim's of 2 males and 2 females, and Zadock's of 4 males and 3 females.

ABIGAIL NIMS RISING.

Abigail Nims was captured when less than four years old, and her after-life remained a mystery for more than two centuries. Then Miss Baker's "Hunt for the Captives" revealed the record of her life in Canada. The child, "living in the wigwam of a squaw of the Mountain" was baptized in the Roman Catholic mission on the fifteenth of June, 1704, as Mary Elizabeth; was married at the age of fifteen to Josiah Rising, a fellow captive; and lived, and (February 19th, 1748,) died, among the Christian Indians, leaving eight children. The eldest son became a priest, the younger the father of ten children. One daughter was a nun, and another a distinguished Lady Superior.

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Thus was the seed of Godfrey Nims sown in the new world. Others may tell of its fruitage. Few of the family became famous; none notorious. Many beside those here today bless the name of the former president of this association, Col. Ormand F. Nims, or remember "Nims battery" which he commanded when the Union called on her sons to protect her: but in all generations have the rank and file of the Nims name or blood, brave and gentle men and women, fought the good fight and whether led by the loud call of trumpet or by the "still, small voice" of conscience, advanced civilization.

It is right and fitting that we should take granite, torn by Nature's power from the foundations of the earth and clothed by her tenderness with lichens, and set it here—on this homestead—to commemorate those events and typify those qualities which should never be forgotten by any present or future descendant of Godfrey Nims.

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